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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001418

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SA/INS, SA/RA
LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY
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SUBJECT: NEPAL: LAST DITCH EFFORTS TO RESUME PEACE TALKS
LIKELY TO FAIL

REF: KATHMANDU 1413

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) As reported in reftel, Nepal's Maoists have established a July 31 deadline for the Government of Nepal (GoN) to meet their conditions for a third round of peace talks. Embassy contacts in the police concur with our assessment that all the preconditions will not be met, thereby seriously imperiling not just the peace dialogue but also the cease-fire. Despite these dire predictions, the GoN negotiating team is attempting a last ditch effort to save the talks; the team is offering the Maoists the release of three Central Committee Members held in Kathmandu's central jail in exchange for talks. The offer has been forwarded to the Maoist negotiation team through the peace talk coordinators. A Maoist response is expected as early as tomorrow, July 30. The GoN may also request former government negotiator, Narayan Singh Pun, to assist in reviving the peace talks. He is expected to return to Kathmandu from London tomorrow.

2. (SBU) Kathmandu residents are becoming increasingly alarmed by rumors of a Maoist offensive to strike the valley after July 31 deadline. Police sources speculate that elements of the Maoist People's Liberation Army are actually mobilizing in the East and West and that any attack on Kathmandu Valley would serve to distract the security forces.

3. (C) Comment: The GoN's last-minute efforts will fall well short of Maoist demands. While some in the security forces see the benefits of preemptive action against the Maoists before the deadline, we believe it unlikely the GoN will move to break the cease-fire. However, our concern that the Maoists may strike before July 31 is much higher. Security forces, while hopeful peace efforts will succeed, continue their elevated defensive posture.
MALINOWSKI